

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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R 121001Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHEC 5589

INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

AMCONSUL MEDAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 9105

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SOPN, PINT, ID

SUBJECT: THREE INDONESIAN NEWSPAPERS CLOSED

1. SUMMARY: THREE MINOR INDONESIAN NEWSPAPERS WERE CLOSED BY GOVERNMENT ORDERS LAST WEEK, BUT CLOSURES DO NOT APPEAR TO REPRESENT STRICTER GOI POLICY ON PRESS FREEDOM. PAPERS INVOLVED INCLUDE JAKARTA DAILY WAKTUX (PUBLISHED WEEKLY) AND WEEKLY DUNIA FILM PLUS BANDUNG WEEKLY GAYA. NONE HAD SIGNIFICANT READERSHIP OR JOURNALISTIC STATUS. END SUMMARY.

2. THREE NEWSPAPERS WERE CLOSED LAST WEEK BY GOVERNMENT ORDERS FOR VARIOUS REASONS. WAKTU, A SMALL JAKARTA PAPER AUTHORIZED TO PUBLISH DAILY BUT WHICH ONLY CAME OUT WEEKLY, HAD PUBLISHING PERMIT WITHDRAWN BY DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION JULY 5. REASONS GIVEN WERE ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT IN BLACKMAIL, COLLECTING ADVERTISEMENTS BY EXTORTION, PUBLISHING REPORTS WHICH TENDED TO PLAY OFF ONE AUTHORITY AGAINST ANOTHER, PROMOTING SOCIAL UNREST AND SHOWING LACK OF DISCRETION IN CRITICISM.

3. ALSO CLOSED BY SAME ORDER WAS DUNIA FILM, JAKARTA WEEKLY COVERING FILMS AND ENTERTAINMENT. NO EXPLANATION WAS GIVEN BY INFORMATION DEPARTMENT FOR CLOSURE, BUT PAPER NOT KNOWN TO HAVE

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ENGAGED IN ANY POLITICAL COMMENTARY.

4. BANDUNG WEEKLY TABLOID GAYA WAS CLOSED JULY 8 BY ORDER OF WEST JAVA KOPKAMTIB CHIEF. CLOSURE FOLLOWED CHARGES THAT GAYA HAD IRRESPONSIBLY DISCREDITED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN ARTICLE WHICH STATED THAT IF FORMER PERTAMINA DIRECTOR IBNU SUTOWO SHOULD BE BLAMED FOR PERTAMINA FAILURES, FINANCE MINISTER ALI WARDHARNA SHOULD BE PROSECUTED. PAPER REPORTEDLY WARNED PREVIOUSLY BY KOPKAMTIB BUT CONTINUED TO PUBLISH VARIOUS ARTICLES ATTACKING GOI HANDLING OF PERTAMINA PROBLEMS, INCLUDING CHARGES THAT GOVERNMENT WAS UNDER PRESSURE FROM IGGI AND U.S.

5. COMMENT: THREE CASES APPEAR TO HAVE LITTLE CONNECTION. CLOSURES DO NOT APPEAR TO PRESAGE MAJOR CRACKDOWN ON INDONESIAN PRESS BUT DO ILLUSTRATE GOI SENSITIVITY TO DIVISIVE CRITICISM. ALL PAPERS HAD VERY LIMITED CIRCULATION AND LITTLE STANDING IN JOURNALIST CIRCLES, PARTICULARLY WAKTU WHICH HAD BEEN UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR PAST YEAR. NO RECENT COPIES OF WAKTU AVAILABLE HERE. GAYA WAS REPORTEDLY SUBSIDIZED BY IBNU SUTOWO AND CONSISTENTLY TOOK HIS PART IN FEUD WITH TECHNOCRATS IN GOVERNMENT.
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